

# FROM TALK TO TEXT

BY

ADDISON BALLARD

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FROM TALK TO TEXT





# FROM TALK TO TEXT

OR

A LIKELY STORY!—LIKELY ENOUGH

BY

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“*The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like*”—



## P R E F A C E

IN general, the author aims here to point through Nature an easy way to Faith.

In particular, he believes it will be found:

That II sums in briefest form the true nature and scope of Analogical Reasoning;

That XII discloses a plausible but serious error in the "faith-healing" theory;

That XV, XVI simplify the confused questions of "Comparative Religions" and the true ground for Christian Unity;

That XX, XXI give to Miracle its true place;

That XXII, XXIII discriminate by original generalizations between Natural and Moral Government; and

That XXIV, XXV make somewhat easier of acceptance the (by some) so-called "hard" doctrines of grace.

Part of what is here printed has appeared already in periodical form.

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# I

FROM TALK TO TEXT



## FROM TALK TO TEXT

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PREACHER and philosopher discourse on parallel lines but in opposite directions—the preacher downward, from text to talk; the philosopher upward, from talk to text.

In the world-making realm the preacher begins with God and ends with the heavens and the earth; the philosopher begins with the heavens and the earth and ends with God.

In the economic sphere the inspired preacher of proverbs begins with the “fear of the Lord”; his talk being thus, at the very outset, invested with the twofold sanction of authority and accountability. Industry now becomes more than prudence to be preferred; it is righteousness to be rewarded. Sloth, besides being folly to be shunned, becomes wickedness to be punished. Hence, by a beautiful consistency, this wise man’s two moral discourses end as they begin—with God; his “Book of Proverbs” beginning with

God as Lord; his "Book of Ecclesiastes" ending with God as Judge.

With the moralist the order is reversed. Many of the proverbs in "Poor Richard's Almanac" are as good in their way as are the like Proverbs of Solomon. But with Franklin, the philosopher, the fear of consequences, not the "fear of the Lord," is the "beginning of wisdom." He begins with men. A shrewd observer of their ways, he applies himself to the task of discovering why it is that one man, for example, attains to competence, comfort and esteem, while another man has for his portion in life only poverty, pity and shame. These different results and their causes he finds to be so uniform that he sees the way to sum up his observations in a series of practical maxims and rules which all will find it to their advantage to follow.

Franklin does not stop here, however. He cannot but surmise that consequences linked so uniformly to actions point to some predisposing purpose. From consequences, therefore, as from a broad landing-place on the great stairway of discovery, he ascends from purpose to Purposer,

from precept to Preceptor, from law to Law-giver, from principle to Prince. Beginning his "Poor Richard" as a philosopher, he ends it nevertheless as a preacher, goes upward from talk to text and so ends where Solomon begins; "This doctrine, my friends," says "Poor Richard," "is reason and wisdom; but, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry, frugality and prudence, though excellent things, for they may all be blasted without the blessing of Heaven, and therefore ask that blessing humbly."

This carrying downward of an authorized precept and applying it to conduct, and this parallel but opposite going upward from experience to a justified command, applies equally to men in communities; to city, state, and national government and to international behavior. What does it all amount to—this ceaseless arraignment of official corruption; these frantic and mostly futile attempts to harmonize the conflicting claims of capital and labor; this despairing lament over the "impassably separated accumulations of wealth and poverty"; this no-end of peace and other like ameliorating congresses, convocations, and conventions; this theorizing babel of humanita-

rian discussion; these fiercely fought moral-issue campaigns and elections—this “perpetual” com-  
“motion” problem solved in the Sisyphean attempt to solve the others—what in the last analysis can we make of all this but a slow, zigzagging, century-paced talking of ourselves upward to the simple text so long ago given (and which, if heeded, would have left a misguided experience none of these hard problems to solve)—to the simple text,

“AND AS YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE ALSO TO THEM LIKEWISE.”

## II

“A LIKELY STORY!” “LIKELY ENOUGH”





“A LIKELY STORY!” “LIKELY ENOUGH”

---

IN these five words may be epitomized the need, the occasion, the scope and the success of Bishop Butler's great work, “The Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature.”

“What!” exclaims the angered, eighteenth-century deist, “this life a probation for another? That other and endless life to be one of rewards and punishments for our actions here? God punishing an innocent man that the guilty may escape? His working among men by Mediator and miracle? Likely stories, these! Tell them, if you will, to dupes and imbeciles, but not to me. Such superstitious dogmas my first-hand studies of nature and providence force me both to deny and to resent. In His works and ways I do see much of God, but nothing of religion. You might as well hope to put off on a connoisseur in art a comic cartoon for a ‘Raphael’ as to put off on me the

Bible as the work of God. It is not at all in His style."

"But have you made an exhaustive study of our many elaborate treatises on Natural and Revealed Religion?"

"As well ask whether or not I have carefully considered the so-called proofs of squaring the circle. To me the one is morally, as the other is mathematically, both impossible and absurd."

"I frankly accept the issue," replies Butler. "Supposing there were no Bible in existence; let us inquire together what nature and providence foreshadow as 'likely enough' to be true as to those great matters in question about which it so deeply concerns us all to be rightly informed. When we shall have finished this joint inquiry, I believe that I shall then have from you the admission, not, it may be, that Christianity is true, but that it is 'likely enough' true to warrant our candid and most earnest consideration; not that it will have been proven, perhaps, but that it will have been shown to be at least provable, or probable."

This study of God in nature and providence having thus turned the ear-shut sceptic into an

open-ear listener; the denier into a debater; Christian apologetics are relied on to carry inquiry forward to complete and happy conviction. The text-wise talk of analogy leads to, illustrates and confirms not only the simpler truths, but the mysterious and deeper tenets, also, of the Christian faith.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like," changes the over-hasty exclamation of scorn to the more thoughtful, qualified assent, "Likely Enough."

If "On to Revelation" is the foreshadowing command of Nature; "Back to Nature" is the confirming word of Revelation.



### III

WITHOUT OBSERVATION



## WITHOUT OBSERVATION

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NATURE is unobtrusive. However beautiful or bountiful her working, she sounds no trumpet before her that she may be seen of men. Unless observant and thoughtful, we fail to see what she is doing till it is done. Only intent watchers mark in the buds forming on leafless twigs her silent promise of the coming spring. The sun from his southern goal posts no flaming advertisement of his intended journey to the North. Nor does he then, like an ambitious athlete, take a swift run, that he may leap the equator at a single bound. On the contrary, with such even, unmarked and majestic step does he ascend the glowing steep of the Zodiac that, ere we are aware, he has touched the burning summit and begun his equally slow descent. Along the eastern horizon the glowing, golden ball of the mighty pendulum swings back and forth unnoticed in its sublimely measured beat between Capricorn and Cancer.

Our long midwinter shadows do not shorten suddenly as did the shadow on the dial of Ahaz. They shorten so slowly that we do not, perhaps, notice their diminished length till, in our midsummer shadows, we see our heads almost touching our feet in the middle of the path, and seem to ourselves to have shrunk to the stature of children.

The voices of spring do not break all at once upon us. One note of a single blue-bird is all you will hear for many days. But another comes and then another. Secretly and unsuspectedly the bird-choir is re-enforced till at length, as if by miracle, forest and grove and thicket are alive with melody. Before we had thought, the birds are mated and have built their nests; and when we first see a robin with a worm in its bill flying up into the thick foliage of the maple, we pause with incredulity, and wonder at the swift and unheeded lapse of the passing days.

And as the coming, so the going of summer is "without observation." Decay, like growth, is unheralded and therefore for a time unperceived. Here and there a leaf on here and there a tree begins to turn; then a spray and then a bough; a



live coal and then a burning branch on their green hearths, till valley and mountainside are all ablaze. The leaves fall—not all at once, but in slow succession. Some one of the thousands on the tree is the first to drop. Weaker than its fellows, or having sooner finished its appointed work, it lets go its hold and sinks to its lowly resting-place.

The seasons have their respective colors, but the changes from one color to another are not noticeable, except after somewhat long intervals. Grass and trees are not painted as men paint houses, with coats of distinct and darker hue. The paler green of April brightens insensibly into the deeper green of June; and this in its turn is changed—not instantaneously as the chemist discharges vegetable colors in his laboratory—but fades away into crimson and brown and russet.

So in the silence of its changes is human life. As spring brightens insensibly into summer, so childhood brightens into youth, and youth into manhood. As no one can tell, except by the almanac, the dividing line between spring and summer, so no one can tell just the transition point between infancy and childhood, or between childhood and youth. There is no particular hour, day,

week or month when the mother ceases to speak of her babe and begins to call it her little boy or girl; no particular month, or even year, when the boy or girl becomes the young man or the young woman.

And as both body and mind develop gradually, so do they gradually decline. Time ploughs the face, not as men plough a field, thrusting the share at once to the lowest point beneath the sward. This tireless ploughman ploughs shallow, but he ploughs often and he ploughs long. The lines of thought and care with which at first he just skims the unsullied brow, are deepened little by little into the furrows and ridges of old age. It is only the quick eye and ready hand of disquieted affection that descries and pulls the first gray hairs. No man knows just when to begin to call himself old.

But though unable to note the steps or to explain the manner of physical decay, none can deny its reality or be blind to its results. There are those of whom all at length say, "He is failing;" or, "He is an old man." Slowly and reluctantly as children come to see and to say this of their parents, yet the time does come when even the most affectionate of children are forced to say, as

said Jacob's sons to Joseph, " We have a father, an old man."

It is but *natural*, then, that the ongoings of the " Kingdom of Heaven " should also be " without observation "; that its fore-sayings should be so veiled in diction as to require accomplishment for their true interpretation; that its growth should be so silent from seed to sickle, from blade to ear, that even the appointed reapers must be told when the fields are " white for the harvest "; that only the few who have been on the watch for redemption should be apprized of its approach; and, on the other and losing side, that it should be only after the quiet withdrawal of its offered good, that the blind and unblessed should be made sure that the Kingdom of God had come nigh unto them.



## IV

KEEPING AND KEPT



## KEEPING AND KEPT

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LIFE in nature, of whatever kind, from the lowest to the highest, is both kept and self-keeping.

Plant-life is kept in that it is supplied with the organs and the means of nutrition and defence. It is self-keeping in that the plant makes use of these organs to pick out, work up and take in the provided elements of its growth. The raw material being given, it spins and weaves its own protecting robe. The wheat-stalk sheathes itself with silex and at needed intervals adds a strengthening joint. The leaf spreads varnish on its exposed side. The sapling shapes for itself a shield of bark. Against gravity ever engaged to pull it down and wind to blow it over, the rising trunk offsets the increasing leverage of its spreading boughs by the firmer anchorage of its extending roots. With almost maternal tenderness the infant germs are closely wrapped against the cold. If

stung, the tree prepares and pours out a secretion to neutralize or expel the poison.

Animal life is both kept and self-keeping. Food is provided and the means of shelter; but the animal perishes unless it prepare the shelter and seek the food. A place is given the fox where to dig his hole, but the fox must dig it. To birds material is given for building their nests, but the birds must build them. To man is given soil and seed and sun and season; skill to invent and strength to toil; but he is kept in life only as he puts forth this strength and skill to fell forests, till farms, work mines, erect houses, build and operate factories and mills, cultivate the arts, seek out and apply remedies for disease.

Most happily are these two complementary ideas conjoined in the inspired words: "That Thou givest them they gather. Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good."

The Creator gives; the creature gathers. Not to His opened hand do His creatures come as beggars come to receive from the hand of charity their idle dole. Through all waters is sifted abundant food, but the fishes must seek it and catch it; each with the implement which God has provided—



leviathan with his net, the sword-fish with his blade. "The lions seek their meat from God," but it is by "roaring after their prey." "He fills the appetite of the young lions," but only as they "couch in their dens, and abide in the covert and lie in wait." While "He provides for the raven its food," the raven is at the same time busy with eyes, wings, talons and beak. When "its young ones cry unto God" for the "meat which they lack," it "wanders" far and wide in wise and patient search.

Intellectual life is at once kept and self-keeping. The knowledge requisite for mental growth is scattered in profusion over the earth and through the heavens. But although there are in it all the conditions for classification and unification, in no instance is it classified and unified for us. The classifying and unifying we must do for ourselves. God gives us the materials for all the sciences, but not a single science. We are left to do our own observing, experimenting and systematizing; to devise all the appliances of education; to make our own books, gather our own libraries, invent our own apparatus, make our own scientific collections, build our own halls of in-

struction. God educates us, but only as we educate ourselves. It is only by the persevering pursuit of knowledge that we keep ourselves in the love and enjoyment of knowledge. Some particular branch of learning which we may at one time have enjoyed we cease to enjoy if we neglect its pursuit.

SPIRITUAL life, as analogy of the lower kinds of life might lead us to expect, is both kept and self-keeping. As there are means of husbandry, commerce, finance, learning; and as the farmer, merchant, financier, student, prosper only as the appointed means are faithfully employed, so there are "means of grace" and we prosper spiritually only as they are diligently improved. An unopened or unstudied Bible no more gives us a knowledge of God's love in redemption than an unopened or unstudied text-book on algebra gives us a knowledge of algebra; no more than an ungathered, untasted, uneaten harvest ministers to the life and growth of the body. As the sluggard pines in sight of waving grain-fields; as the idle student is a starveling in the midst of text-books, libraries and teachers; so, although given the Word of God, time and place for closet-prayer,

houses for public prayer and praise; only as we avail ourselves earnestly and habitually of these graciously offered helps will the flame of love to God and man be kept brightly burning in our hearts.

With St. Peter's "*Kept by the power of God,*" therefore, must be coupled always St. Jude's "*Keep yourselves in the love of God.*"



# V

## THE PARALLAX OF PAIN



## THE PARALLAX OF PAIN

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IN NATURE, parallax is a change in the place of a variable object when referred to one whose position is invariable; the transferring of our own position or motion to that of another body. It is due to this that, sitting, it is impossible to tell the exact time by the hands of a clock considerably above us. The hands are not where they seem to be. We must rise and bring our eyes to the level of the dial-plate. Like instances are the gliding past us of trees and fences as we ride in the cars and the confusion into which objects in the landscape then appear to be thrown. Of like illusion is the sun's daily motion through the heavens from east to west, and his yearly advance toward and recession from his northern and southern limits, the "tropics"—the sun's "turning-points," as the word means. These are not real motions of the sun, but are our own planetary or wandering movements transferred to him. We

turn over from west to east; not he, from east to west. He, the father of our system and of its light, retains ever his steadfast place in the centre of his circling family, and with him is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.

As, then, we do not stripe the sun's fair disk with zones; as we do not charge him with all our variations of climate, with "pinching cold and scorching heat"; with "vapor and mist and exhalation hot, corrupt and pestilent"; with "snow and hail and stormy gust and flaw"; it were unnatural in the spiritual realm to charge upon God the vicissitudes, the perplexing inequalities of our daily life. The Father of lights, He is ever the same God of love, consolation and blessing to all who turn lovingly and obediently toward Him. And just as He has given us the means and opportunity to counteract and even to profit by the vicissitudes of the seasons—not with the instinct of birds who by following the sun keep on the same relative parallel, but by doing what is equivalent—by industriously providing in summer against the rigors of winter; and as by such a wise forecast and diligence we may keep the body in constant equilibrium of comfort; and as He has



promised that the means for this deliverance shall never be withdrawn, but that "while the earth remaineth seed-time and harvest" shall not cease—so in the Gospel of His Son has He also provided that we may, if we will, overcome and even profit by all the painful alternations of our fallen spiritual state; that by diligent Christian husbandry, by meditation, watchfulness and prayer we may maintain a cheerful equanimity through all the trying reverses of our mortal lives; while at the same time, through this patience and discipline of faith we lay up for ourselves a harvest of unending joy.

Thus is it that for the loving, trusting child of God the hard problem of discipline is solved by the PARALLAX OF PAIN.



## VI

### THE DIAL AND THE WHEELS



## THE DIAL AND THE WHEELS

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INFIDELITY makes the same objection to Christianity as a power for the regeneration of the world that was once made to out-of-door clocks. The objection to tower clocks used to be their liability to be stopped in winter by snow and sleet driving in, sheeting the graduated face and obstructing the hands. When the hands were stopped, the clock was stopped. But, at length, a clock was invented so ingeniously contrived that the wheels continued to revolve regularly, even when the pointers were ice- or snow-bound; and not only that, but so that when the snow and the ice were melted the released hands at once moved forward through the whole arc, over which, but for the storm, they would have moved steadily and imperceptibly.

So of the times when the work of Christ appears to come to a standstill. The hands on the dial of progress are blocked by the storms of

bigotry, prejudice and persecution. And men say, This is a good clock enough; it is well made; the machinery is unusually fine; the motive power excellent, and it keeps remarkably accurate time when it goes; and it goes very well in pleasant weather. But it is altogether too delicate and frail for such rough days and nights as we are liable to have in this cold and stormy latitude of ours. It cannot stand the blasts of ridicule, error, persecution, and false philosophy, of which this earthly atmosphere of ours is so full.

This is but a surface view. The internal machinery of this divine clock never runs down, never gets out of order, is never obstructed, never stops. Through all outward pauses and discouragements, the plan of the dear Christ moves calmly, irresistibly forward. The seeming inaction is but a secret preparation for some great onward and outward movement of his cause. The results of this hidden working are husbanded without loss, and they will all appear in what men, when they see them, will call a sudden, unlooked-for, almost miraculous start in the history of the church and of the world.

So was it with our late Civil War which swept

away an age-entrenched hinderance, and advanced Christian civilization hundreds of years in the short space of four years. The obstructing masses are melted, and the great arms move at once to their true place on the dial-plate of the world's history.

So, too, of God's work in the heart of each faithful Christian. Had we stood on the outside of Bedford jail we should have deplored that such a faithful servant of Christ is brought to such a standstill of usefulness and spiritual advancement. We would have said, "This poor prisoner can make no further attainments in the Christian life; he can no longer labor for the cause he so much loves, cut off as he now is from the usual means and opportunities of growth and service." But the wheels inside that prison-case all the time were far from being idle, and when Bunyan was at length released, was there any mistaking what "Progress" the solitary "Pilgrim" had made toward the "Celestial City!"

Many a child of God is now struggling with the heavy, cramping fetters of care, toil, anxiety; bodily weakness while the spirit is willing, a scanty purse while the heart is royal in its generosity,

faltering and unready utterance while the soul is rich with Christian wisdom and Christian love—and these dear children of God bewail their straitened and hedged-up condition and deplore that, as it seems to them, their reward must be so small in heaven.

But, no; God's eye is on the wheels within as well as on the dial without. The good work of grace goes on quite as fast in private as in public, in poverty as in wealth, in sorrow as in joy, in toil and care as in luxury and ease. Not one good desire is lost, no faithful duty forgotten, no closet prayer unheard, no offering however small untreasured, no silent tear-dropping, unheeded. And in that brighter world to which we are all hastening, that world of exact and righteous recompense, where the true worth of all souls will be unveiled to the gaze of the holy, the hands will at once move over all the drear spaces of this our earthly weakness, tribulation and sorrow, to their true place and will tell the hours of our secret, patient, loving endeavors.

Now and then a day is dark from early morning until almost evening. What if some one should say, "The sun is feeble or he is idle, or he



is unfaithful to-day. He has not moved from his place in the east since daybreak? ”

But has he not been moving? And has he not been shining? Has he not run his race diligently and successfully? Or has he lost his power to shine because for a time the obstructing clouds have intercepted his beams? We have seen such questionings and criticisms answered when toward evening the clouds have broken and mountain and valley have been flooded with light and when the very clouds that darkened his way have been irradiated with his brightest beams. Then, too, has his place in the far west told how steadily and patiently he has kept up his constant and faithful march through the heavens. “Then”—what a rapture for us in that little word, “then”—

“THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH LIKE THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER.”



## VII

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY



## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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ALL snow is not the same snow, but there is one snow of the mountain-top and another of the plain; one white and glistening, and another the red snow of the Arctics and the Alps. There is one beauty of the star-flake and another of the pyramid-flake, for flake differeth from flake in beauty. Yet though coming down to us in hundreds of these different shapes, from the simple star to the elaborate wheel and axle, the beautiful meteor crystallizes all its "icy atoms" around one and the self-same hexagonal base.

All Scripture is not the same Scripture; but there is one Scripture of history and another of prediction; one of proverb and another of promise; one of anti-type and another of type. There is one glory of the Prophets and another glory of the Psalms and another glory of the Evangelists; for Scripture differeth from Scripture in glory; yet

all from the Alpha of Genesis to the Omega of "Revelation" clustered about one and the self-same resplendent form, that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The snow is impartial in the bountifulness of its blessing. Neglected by-ways and loneliest lanes are by it paved as smoothly as the finest and most frequented avenues. Whatever man makes beautiful the silent architect of the clouds makes incomparably more beautiful, and yet with Nature's true "democracy of art" the most unsightly and deformed partake the comeliness of this divine decoration. The poorest hovel is enamelled as brilliantly as the costliest mansion; the rounds of the hod-carrier's ladder are sheathed with as pure a porcelain as the stately turret against which it leans; the farmer's fence-pickets and rails are as richly furred as the arched gateway of the prince. Shop and store, wharf and warehouse, halls of justice and domes of state, share alike with the temples of religion the same bright and celestial visitation.

So does the "Word" come down and touch

with indiscriminating beauty all the diversified interests and relationships of men. While there is no merely secular learning or refinement that is beyond the need of the purifying Word, there is, on the other hand, no ignorance or vileness but is susceptible of its heavenly adornment. So plainly and with such heart-gladness may we read even in the snow the loving purpose of God, that our homes and our places of business, our learning and our art, our private interests and our public trusts may be alike transfigured with the irradiation of his divine WORD.





## VIII

NATURE'S GUARANTEE FOR THE PROS-  
PERITY OF THE "WORD"



## NATURE'S GUARANTEE FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE "WORD"

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IN the making of his rain and snow God might, if he saw fit, employ human helpers. Lifting them up into his vast laboratory of winds and vapors, He might take them then to the top of his high aerial towers and show them how through his finely woven sheets of cloud-gauze He sifts his silver shot upon the earth. Or, conducting them through his lofty ethereal mint He might teach them how to use the tiny dies with which He stamps the snow-flake, so that they too might scatter this beautiful coin of the heavens broadcast over the ground.

Human helpers He has seen fit to employ in the greater work of giving to the world his revealing Word. It is because of his having chosen out holy men, and because of his having lifted them up by his Holy Spirit to the heights of his immeasurable wisdom, fore-knowledge, holiness and love,

that they were enabled to satisfy the world's spiritual hunger with the heavenly manna of the Written Word.

“ But not all the rain and snow,” objects one, “ goes to nourish the growth of plants that they may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.”

True, indeed, it is that by far the greater part of that which comes down does “ return thither”; ascending as vapor from land, lake and ocean, and running back to the ocean in rills and rivers. Yet this which seems at first to be but idle and profitless repetition is part of one and the same mighty scheme of world-wide irrigation for the eventual support of human life.

So, although the whole of all true and faithful use of the “ Word ” may not go directly to either the conversion of sinners or the edification of saints; yet, as indirect results, the world gets higher civilization, freer and more stable governments, purer homes and better institutions of learning—society erecting these as so many barriers of public and social order behind which the Church flourishes and souls are saved.

How almost ludicrously abortive, in this view of the matter, are all the attempts of its enemies to destroy the power of the living Word or to prevent its still wider dissemination! Meteorology has made wonderful progress of late, but where is the weather-expert who has yet attained such mastery of the elements that he can hinder the rain from "coming down, or the snow from heaven and watering the earth?"

Should the time ever come when scoffers and sceptics can stop the on-going of God's great system of world-wide evaporation and irrigation; make a screen wide enough to cover all the continents and all the oceans and so keep the vapors from rising and the rains and snows from falling, then they may hope, but not till then, to keep the Word of God from going forth and "ACCOMPLISHING THAT WHICH HE PLEASES AND PROSPERING IN THE THING WHERE TO HE SENDS IT."



IX

CAUGHT AWAY





## CAUGHT AWAY

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“ MAKE yourself necessary to the world ” has been considered good counsel for young men. It is. But the true reliever of human want and woe is warm with another and, if possible, a nobler inspiration; to make himself unnecessary to men at the earliest moment possible. It is the false physician who ties himself to his patient by retarding his recovery. It is the false advocate who glues himself to his client by purposely prolonging the suit. It is the false mechanic who continues his employer's dependence on him by stretching out the job. It is the false priest who binds the trembling devotee to himself and to “ the Church ” by cruel chains of symbol and rite and relic—keeping fast shut the doors of prophecy and evangel, which, once opened by loving interpretation of Christ, would send the released worshipper rejoicing on his way.

After the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, the Authorized Version says that the "Spirit caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing." The Revision corrects thus: "The Spirit caught away Philip and the eunuch saw him no more for (gar) he went on his way rejoicing." Now, as "gar" is the word in all the manuscripts, and is never, either in the classics or elsewhere in the New Testament, used in the sense of "kai" (and), we can but wonder at the inaccuracy of the Common Version, and the more so, as a beautiful and instructive thought is veiled and hidden by the mis-translation.

Like Cornelius, the eunuch had come to believe that the God of the Hebrews was the true God. Like Cornelius, he desired nothing so much as to know how this one true God might be most acceptably worshipped. He had come all the way from Ethiopia, believing that God must be best worshipped in his own temple in his own holy city. His worshipping had been no perfunctory performance of an ecclesiastical requirement. What he saw and heard and did in Jerusalem inflamed, but did not satisfy, his devotion. He sought bet-

ter knowledge by an earnest study of the Hebrew Scriptures which he had also accepted as the Word of God, making a real "vade mecum" of the sacred roll, which he was taking back with him to his distant home.

But what is darker than a dark lantern till the door of the lantern is opened? And such was the passage in Isaiah to the eunuch (dark without, though full of divinest radiance within), till Philip came, sent of God, to open the door and let the guiding light stream forth—one and the self-same Spirit, inditing the Scripture, exciting the inquiry, supplying the interpreter—a trinity of loving acts, all conspiring to the saving of a now intelligently believing soul.

And now the "for" gives as reason why the Spirit "caught away Philip" that the eunuch, having had his doubts resolved, and having believed on that Jesus whom Philip had so clearly preached to him, "went on his way rejoicing."

Philip has fulfilled his ministry to the eunuch. What need that he should remount the chariot now that he has sealed the convert's faith with the water of baptism? What further need of the candle now that the sun has risen? Of the guide

when he has brought us to our destination? Of the usher when he has led us to the joy of the King's presence?

And for us what a rapture would that be, to be "caught away by the Spirit" into the spirit world just when, and only when, as minister, teacher, editor, author, mother, father, sister, brother, child, or friend, we had, before those with whom we here journeyed for a little, so preached or lived Christ that, kindled with glad faith and hope of our own inspiring, they to whom we had thus faithfully fulfilled our appointed ministry of love should go on for the remainder of their way "REJOICING IN JESUS."

X

THE LIKELIHOOD OF A RESURRECTION



## THE LIKELIHOOD OF A RESURRECTION

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AWARE that to even honest scepticism so mysterious a change must seem at least highly improbable, an inspired biologist, well versed in the life problems of two worlds, submits an argument from analogy, to remove this stumbling-block of improbability out of the way of belief in the resurrection.

He bases his argument on the fact, open to all, that material substance is endowed with properties, undergoes changes and puts on appearances so unlike one to another as beforehand to have balked conjecture and even to have defied belief. He refers us to that broad and most obvious classification of substances as mineral, vegetable and animal, where the boundaries are in general so clearly defined that we speak of these three departments as so many separate kingdoms. Not content with this generic distinction, he points us to the unlikeness in form and structure of different species in

each of these kingdoms. "Every seed has its own body." Mosses, grains, flowers, trees have each a grace or majesty peculiarly its own. Earth-worm and eagle, violet and oak, dull clay and dazzling diamond, are contrasts beyond all human preconception. So with unorganized matter in its great masses: "There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory." And may it not well be that this natural body of ours, sown though it be in weakness, dishonor and corruption, shall yet be raised a spiritual body in incorruption, in glory and in power?

This argument from analogy, while of itself it establishes no truth, is still a proper rebuke to all those, more numerous now than they were in the Apostles' unscientific days, who most unscientifically transfer their own self-constituted judgment of an improbable event to the testimony on which the event itself rests; who instead of impartially weighing the evidence and cordially accepting whatever fact is established by it, bewilder themselves and others by foolish and unreasonable questions about the method of the fact; who, to take the instance in point, before



allowing belief in the resurrection would ask and would insist on having the questions answered, "How are the dead raised up; with what body do they come?"

You hold in your hand a seed which has been sent you by a friend in a distant country, who assures you that from it will come a surpassingly beautiful flower. But you say, "What; a beautiful flower out of this dull, dry, hard, insignificant-looking thing! Tell me first how it is going to come, and with what size, odor, color and shape." In your incredulity and scorn you cast your seed into the fire. Are you not justly accounted a "fool?" How are these questions of yours to be answered? In one way and in one way only—by first burying the seed. If you quarrel about that and look for an answer in any other way, how can you expect from the open and fair-minded either sympathy or respect?

Death having been ordained by God to be the antecedent of a new and higher life, your seed's prophecy cannot be fulfilled "except it die." Convinced at last that in no other way can God's thought and purpose be either realized or understood, asking no more captious or foolish ques-

tions, you bury your seed and wait patiently the appointed period of its germination and growth. Then, but not before, you will get your answer.

Instead of being staggered, then, or dispirited by the death of a Christian friend or by the certainty of our own death, we are to draw from it, rather an argument for our continued existence in a higher and nobler sphere. We do know that from the lily bulb does come the lily, from the tiny acorn the majestic oak, but as to the manner of our own resurrection, as to the capabilities, structure and form of the new spiritual body—these are questions to which in the very nature of things we can have complete answer only when God shall give it to us by actual experience of such a change and of such a body.

## XI

### THE PSYCHICAL AND THE PNEUMATICAL BODY



## THE PSYCHICAL AND THE PNEUMATICAL BODY

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ALTHOUGH the rendering, "There is a natural (born) body," is interpretation, not translation—"Psychical" (breathing) being St. Paul's term)—we may yet, without error, accept the interpretation and so the rendering, since of a natural or born body no term is perhaps more comprehensively descriptive than "psychical" or breathing. A born body as soon as born begins to breathe, and only as long as it breathes does it live. Not that the breath *is* the life, for the unborn body lives, though unbreathing. Yet after birth the life-principle can no longer do its work of nourishment and growth without the aid of respiration.

This characterizing of the body we now have as an inbreathed and inbreathing body is no invention of his own, the Apostle hastens to assure us. It is not even a new conception, he at once adds. Rather, it is but part of the inspired ac-

count of man's original creation: "For so it is written. The first Adam was made a living soul"—made a living soul by God "breathing into his nostrils the breath of life"—"soul" here plainly referring to animal life, having to do only with the sense, appetite, and the outer visible world.

While the root meaning of "air" or "breath" is the same for both "pneumatical" and "psychical," yet by New Testament and by latest metaphysical appropriation as well, the pneumatical has for its sphere the supersensible and for its seat in man his higher rational and moral faculties. This gives us to understand, I think, what the Apostle has in mind when he writes, "And there is a pneumatical (a spiritual) body." And as explanatory of this, "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The contrast lies between "quickenened" and "quickenening."

It is not by the rational spirit that the body we now have either is kept alive or was given life to at the first. Virtually and essentially the natural and the spiritual are independent, one, of the other, each having its own distinct and separate sphere—both designed, it is true, to work together in complete harmony, yet so often and so deplorably

working at cross-purposes that only by persistent warfare can the spiritual conquer peace with the insurgent animalism of the lower nature.

With this animalism with all its alien, hampering, and menacing conditions the "spiritual body" has nothing to do. Sustained directly and wholly by the "quickeningspirit," there is in it neither call nor occasion for the *expenditure of a separate vital force*. Shot through and throughout by the spirit itself, it responds instantly and obediently to all the spirit's desires, movements, and needs. Having to be neither repaired nor nourished, it is—without weakness, weariness, or pain—the ever-ready and tireless servant of the free spirit.

It is such a body that is now the fit abode and instrument of the ascended Christ, and such, we are assured, is to be the spiritual body of everyone who is begotten of Him. This comes to the believer, the Apostle reasons, by virtue of that law of our spiritual heredity which in its operation is in the truest sense as natural as is the law of our psychical descent: "For, as we have borne the image of the earthly *one* (such the full rendering) we shall also bear the image of the heavenly One;" that is, as by generation we have received

from our first progenitor, Adam, a natural body, the image or likeness of his, so by virtue of our regeneration shall we receive from our second progenitor, Christ, a spiritual body, "gloriously fashioned" after the image or likeness of His own.



## XII

“IN MY NAME:” OR, OFFERS OF NAT-  
URAL AND SPIRITUAL HELP



## “IN MY NAME:” OR, OFFERS OF NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL HELP

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THE condition of “name” is implied in the offers which men make to one another of help for the supplying of their natural needs. Just what and how much is meant by the familiar “Is there anything I can do for you to-day?” depends altogether on the “name” of the person asking you the question; not the irrelevant family name, but the business name, signifying what the possessor of it has qualified himself to do. It means entirely different things according as it is asked by your physician, your banker, your lawyer, or your grocer. The “anything” means only anything in the line of their respective callings or professions. Because your physician once told you to call upon him at any time for “anything” you might wish done for either yourself or your family and

promised that, on being thus requested, he would do it, you would not for a moment think of asking him, on the strength of that promise, to discount a note for you, or to teach your children, or to conduct for you a case in court. Other services, if requested, he may do or decline to do; he *binds* himself to such services only as belong to his "name" or profession.

So the promise of Jesus. "Jesus" was not a family designation given Him, as names are generally given by parents. It is a working name, and was given by the angel before His birth to show what His life work was to be: "His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." For other reliefs and deliverances we may ask Him. All our earthly sorrows, griefs, pains, anxieties, we may bring to Him, and those of our friends. Our prayers He hears and will answer, not necessarily by removal of the sorrow, pain or infirmity, for that He has not promised, but by what may be, and often is felt to be, more than an equivalent—by strengthening, sustaining, comforting us under even our deepest sorrows, our sorest afflictions. To remove

*these* burdens He does not promise; to "sustain" us under them, He does.

But that which is the heaviest burden of all, the burden of our sins, that burden we may confidently, unwaveringly, ask Him to *remove*. From poverty, from painful accident, from bodily weakness and suffering, from anguish of bereavement, He may not save us; from our "sins" He will. No prayer, humble and earnest, for the pardon of our sins, and for help in ridding ourselves of their power over us, can be amiss or can go unanswered. There is no room for self-debate, doubt or hesitation.

Such prayer being offered in His "name" claims the promise, and the promise will be surely, lovingly, blessedly fulfilled. We may not grow in wealth, we *shall* grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. We may not recover lost bodily strength; we *shall* be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." We may not be able to stay the perishing of the outward man; the "inward man will be renewed day by day." Jesus may not save us from death and the corruption of the grave; He will surely save us from the second death and from all defilement of sin.

And He will (for to this His “name” is pledged), He *will* at last “present us *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding” and with eternal “joy.”

### XIII

IF; OR, SPIRITUAL LIKE NATURAL SUCCESS,  
STRICTLY CONDITIONED





IF; OR, SPIRITUAL LIKE NATURAL SUCCESS,  
STRICTLY CONDITIONED

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THE first syllable of the word "success" indicates an underlying cause. It suggests an ascending from somewhat beneath explanatory of the ascent. Any success answering by strict construction to the name is bottomed on that indispensable foundation of first things, another and borrowed designation of which is "principles."

In the practice of the arts, whether liberal or useful, this is, without question, complaint or exception, taken to be true. Of them all, not one is or can be successfully pursued save in strict accordance with this, the first of the three great "Primary Laws of Thought," "Whatever is, is," or, as I venture on phrasing it, according to the absolute, unchangeable and everlasting *is-ness* of things. The most successful worker in wood, stone or metal is he who makes most patient and exhaustive study of the distinctive and inalienable

properties of the materials he proposes to employ.

From this ordained and immutable *is-ness* of things it is useless for artist, artisan or inventor trying to escape. The crucible is not mocked. Iron is iron and gold is gold. Mix and melt as he will, the would-be transmuting alchemist has but his labor for his pains. "If," or rather a series of "ifs," limits and controls the answer to even the prayer which we are taught daily to offer for our daily bread. "If" the flour be good, "if" the yeast be good, "if" the oven be at a good heat, the baker enriches your table with a good loaf. If not, not.

That word of the Commandment—"For He is a jealous God," we come better to understand and so less to dread, when we thus come to see that Nature is jealous too; that she has her Second Commandment as well; when we come to see further that all which she means by that is, that she insists on being recognized—known over and over again—and by all the "generations" simply for what she is. It is not enough to have once known her; we must re-know her on every new occasion. The careless engineer is reminded by

an observant bystander that he is letting the water get too low in his boiler. He replies airily, "And you—to talk to me about steam." The boiler explodes. The Sinai of the unheeded warning thunders in his ears; "You may have known me once, but you have now assigned you a review of the old and forgotten lesson." Not one of the great forces of Nature with which we "have to do" but has this jealousy, that it will everywhere and always be recognized and respected for what it is.

In prison or the electric chair the criminal is set to re-learn the forgotten lessons of the law; the slanderous gossip in the solitariness of social ostracism, to learn what belongs to decent companionship; the slovenly farmer, clumsy mechanic and careless tradesman are re-taught by lessening incomes the lessons of thrift.

A millennium and a half before our Christian era, a selected people were led from bondage to freedom. They have come at length into the new land where is to be begun a new experiment of national life. Will they make of their great opportunity a national and individual success?

Knowing well that, would they build lastingly, they must build on those first which are also the lasting things, their great Leader and Law-giver prescribes for them the way. He names to them two mountains, their lofty peaks fronting one another across a deep valley. From the top of Gerizim were to be proclaimed the unalterable conditions of promised and guaranteed success; from the top of Ebal the downward path of threatened failure—of loss, disaster and ruin.

From these same two opposing summits, which I would re-name Mt. "If" and Mt. "If Not," still sound to us for the successful ordering of our whole individual, domestic, social, municipal and national life, the same unchangeable assurances of good and of evil:

OF GOOD FROM MT. IF; OF EVIL FROM MT. IF NOT.

## XIV

PASSING AWAY BY FULFILMENT



## PASSING AWAY BY FULFILMENT

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SCATTER plaster over a wheat field; the white patches are visible for a few days, after which they disappear, and the ground is a uniform brown or black as before. Is the plaster destroyed? Passing away by absorption into new and more valuable forms, it reappears in blade, stalk, ear and grain. The leaves of our forests fall, but it is only to rise again, mounting in the stems they nourish to loftier heights and spreading out in wider amplitudes of growth. The rich mould cast about our fruit trees is heavy, inert, cumbrous; but, sought out and vitalized by the roots, it acquires power and motion and upward impulse, and takes on shapes of glad and living beauty, and wealth of fruitfulness. Just where the great river ceases to be a river, it finds enlargement in the expanding lake or estuary. As affluent and prophecy the river passes away; as fulfilment it abides, only with freer scope and larger room.

This distinction in Nature illustrates the meth-

ods to be employed, if the Law of the Spirit in its aspect of penal severity is to pass away from those who are under bondage to it by reason of transgression. That method is not to take part with the criminal against the law. It is not to tell him that the law is inhumane and merciless. It is not to sympathize morbidly with him, as if he were the victim of circumstances and a martyr to civil order. It will not do to say to the inmates of our prisons, "The law shows a revengeful, vindictive spirit, to shut you up in these dreadful walls, separate you from your friends and affix upon you these badges of dishonor." To say that would but make the matter a thousand times worse; worse for the criminal, as well as worse for society. It would encourage him in crime, and so complete his ruin. What we desire is, that the law may pass away from the transgressor as an object of antipathy and of dread. And this is to be effected, not by our "destroying" the law, but by his "fulfilling" it. Offenders must be made to see the wisdom, reasonableness, safety, and greater satisfaction of virtuous citizenship, and to surrender their lawless propensities intelligently and freely. They must be led to see that the attitude



of society toward them is not one of gratuitous and hostile menace, but of calm justice and necessary self-defence. And something wonderful is it to see how completely the law, as an object of aversion and terror, passes away from the violator of it at once, so soon as he comes into relations with it of right and willing obedience.

This same distinction leads us on to the true idea of political freedom, and points out how that idea is to be realized. It instructs us that the millennium of political freedom is not to be brought in through the destruction of government; not by communism, agrarianism, or nihilism; not by the burning of decrees, codes and statutes; not by the tearing down of senate houses and thrones, or the assassination of presidents and kings. Political abuses, oppressions, inequalities are surely to pass away, but not through the iconoclasm of mobs. "All the overthrows of all the tyrannies of ancient or modern times were never able to make corruption free. Let changes of policy or administration be as specious as they may, the political suffering will only deepen until the personal reform comes to redeem the land."

This far-reaching declaration gives us, as well,

the true conception and method of religious freedom. Everywhere we see men trying to break bands and cast away cords. "Are we slaves," they are demanding, "that we must be chained down forever by menacing prohibitions, under which the generations have groaned from the beginning? Are we never to outgrow the narrow dogmas, hampering superstitions and craven fears of ignorance and childishness? Are we never to be done with the rusty, antiquated creeds of our forefathers? Must we ever gasp in the atmosphere of old and smothering bigotry? Is it not time that reason assert its majority and break loose from the tyranny of the past?"

Yes, there is to be progress, enlargement of privilege, increase of spiritual liberty. There is to be a passing away of prohibition, restraint and dogma; but this is not to be by annihilation of any just obligation, or of any truth. Christ, the animating, guiding spirit of all true enlightenment and progress, has purposed that better future when men shall be free from galling yokes. But He it is who "verily" assures us that the ends of law are not to be secured through destruction of its outward forms. He is not deceived, and will

not be mocked by that pretended superiority to the letter which only veils a lack of its spirit. That independence of restraint for which many sigh, comes, and can come, only as the great underlying, ever-abiding principles of civil order, moral precept and spiritual worship are incorporated into the soul; only as men become free in the love of right and of order, in perfected love toward God and man.

“In all its sacred constitution,” says Bishop Huntington,\* “society preaches the sacredness of law, and so points with reverent finger from human law to the divine, to Him in whose breast both have their seat at last. By being servants we become children and heirs. By law we gain liberty. By waiting at the foot of Sinai we are taken into Olivet and Tabor. The tables of stone lean against the cross. Moses is followed by the Messiah. Beyond the valleys of subjection rise the eternal hills of peace. The years of unquestioning and obedient toil ended, there is proclaimed the great Sabbatic festival, where law is love, and order is choice, and government is Fatherhood, and the Ruler’s will is the impulse of every heart.”

\* Social Aspects of Christianity.



XV

THE ONE THOU SHALT



## THE ONE THOU SHALT

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THE old Portuguese navigators had hoped to discover a passage to the East Indies around the southernmost point of the continent of Africa. Repulsed again and again by stormy headlands, they yet persevered till confronted at length by a promontory with so wild a sea that in their despair of doubling it they called it "Cape Non." What they had in vain attempted was to gain the coveted prize by getting past a succession of frowning "Thou Shalt Nots." Columbus, with an enterprise born of a finer and more comprehensive insight, turning his back on these denying and prohibiting headlands, directs the prows of his vessels in a straight course through the open Atlantic; with the happy result that his eyes are ere long greeted with the sight of a New World with possibilities of a freedom, grandeur, wealth and power far surpassing the proudest triumphs of the Old.

That was the glorious solution of the most profound and far-reaching geographical problem of the time.

The deepest, the most practically important ethical problem of the ages had been to find, were it possible, some single and effective "Thou Shalt" which might serve as a complete substitute for an indefinite number of forbidding, impotent and enslaving "Thou Shalt Nots." Can aught exceed the concise beauty with which the greatest of the Apostles has resolved for us this intricate inquiry: "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Thou shalt not covet; and *if there be any other commandment*, [any other 'Thou Shalt Not,'] it is briefly comprehended in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In this brief "comprehension" of countless negations under a single positive precept is the beautiful simplicity and moral sufficiency of love.



XVI

THE ONE RELIGION; OR, BACK TO  
SINAI BY WAY OF CALVARY



## THE ONE RELIGION; OR, BACK TO SINAI BY WAY OF CALVARY

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PRESIDENT LINCOLN began his ever-memorable Gettysburg address by saying: "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

The Hebrew nation, too, was "conceived in liberty" and brought forth from bondage; but it was dedicated to the far deeper and broader proposition, that "supreme love to God and equal love to our neighbor is the full sum of universal human duty."

Jesus himself gave to the world no new, either life-law or heart-law. He came not as a law-giver, but as a keeper of that law, which had already come "by Moses." Not one jot or tittle did He add to that which had been already given. There was nothing to add. To an inquirer He once said that all which any man needs in the way

of either devotional or ethical religion is that he keep perfectly the commandments epitomized so long before by Moses himself as whole-heart love to God and equal love to one's neighbor. By saying that "on these two commandments hangs all the law" he declared them to be the one and only religion of the past. By saying that on these hang all the prophets, he proclaimed that they are the one and only religion of the future; that, in short, there never has been, is not now and never will be any other religion—the religion of all men and for all time; and we may add, for all eternity. Are any waiting with unsatisfied ears for some "last word" to be spoken on this great matter of religion? The last word was long ago spoken. The first word is also the last. The Alpha and the Omega are one.

The "religions" of the world is, therefore, strictly speaking, a false and misleading plural. What is needed is but to re-define; not to define anew.

Joined, however, to this one, unchangeable Sinaitic foundation was this other and altogether unique element in Judaism, that it provided for the forgiveness of individual transgression against

its organic law and for a return to it, through a suffering and sacrifice *other than those of the offender himself*. And just this, as I understand it, Christianity means and is. The work which Jesus took upon him to do was the work of a physician; to restore sick souls to that wholeness, another name for which is health. But health being normal, simple and single, while disease is abnormal, complex and multitudinous, the world's spiritual pharmacy (its so-called "religions") had been as intricate and diversified as its physical pharmacy—vain attempts to get back something consciously lost. It was not a new purse to which the woman with lighted candle returned the lost coin; not a new fold to which the shepherd brought back from the mountains his truant sheep; it was to the same old home to which the rejoicing father welcomed his once unfilial but now repentant child. Hence the misnomer of speaking (except in a popular way) of the "Christian religion," akin to the mistake we should make were we to speak of the health which has been restored through the use of medicine as "medicated health." Christianity is not a religion; it is God's wise and gracious way of bringing lost men back to religion.

Jesus is this way of return. Is there any other way? And following that question is this other and vitally practical one, "What modification of the original, the normal disposition of loyalty, is produced in such of the once disloyal as accept the true sacrifice? What new element in their love, the presence of which becomes a sure test of the sincerity of their return?"

For one, I am satisfied, as a basis of spiritually fraternal and sacramental communion, with a one article creed—the creed of a truly penitent heart. I take it from the Old Testament Scripture, although finding it abundantly approved and indorsed in the New. "I believe," so it would be read or recited, "that the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." On a heart-acceptance of that simple creed alone how could we consistently refuse to admit to our communion any Gentile or any Jew? For if it be a true creed, then all who in heart embrace it both have "God nigh to them" and are "saved."

It only remains to ask, "Where is this broken and contrite heart to be found?" It matters not in the least to me where any others may find it.

Let them find it wherever and however they can. For myself, I find it only at the feet of Him who is at once for me both ark and altar, both priest and sacrifice. Here, "cut from the olive-tree which is wild by nature," I find myself "grafted contrary to nature" into that "good olive-tree" which the greatest of Christian apostles tells me is the still firm, immovable "root"—not upborne by the ingrafted Gentile branches, but itself upbearing them. Here, here only, do I find myself returning through penitent, grateful love to wholehearted love to God and equalhearted love to my neighbor. Here, and only here, do I find the clew which leads me safely and rejoicingly out of, and past, the whole bewildering labyrinth of tangled traditions, theologies, catechisms, sects and creeds; and out of the darker and more bewildering labyrinth of my sins.

When, speaking in metaphor, all the true Israel of God shall meet at length in one common assembly, the meeting-place will be again on the broad plains about the base of Sinai. Thither, to this "one fold," is the Good Shepherd pointing ever his one flock. But it will be far otherwise then than it was when his people were first led

thither by Moses. The same two tables of the law will indeed be there. They will stand high aloft, crowning the summit of the once awful mount, but no longer shooting lightnings through black, enveloping smoke-clouds followed by peals of affrighting thunder. They will shine, rather, from afar to all nations with a mild and winning lustre; instead of the old and terrifying "Thou shalt not," the two tables are now turned toward one another and are become one in the changed figure of a cross; and on its extended arms is now seen emblazoned "Love to God and Love to man"—an "ideal to draw the nations to higher and higher reaches of civilization and progress."

Here, too, will be solved at last the now perplexing question of Christian unity; and not that only, but of Christian and Jewish unity as well. For when, gathered out of all nations we shall meet in concert on the heavenly plains, what will be our one song but the "Song of Moses and the Lamb"? And what is that song but the blended song of the "way" and of the lost way found?



XVII

TRUE FRIENDS OF CHRIST



## TRUE FRIENDS OF CHRIST

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THERE is a kind of natural friend-making, friend-regarding, friend-keeping, and, if need be, friend-restoring, which has in it the necessity of rightfully claimed authority on the one hand and of due obedience to it on the other. This, for lack of any simpler name, I call *institutional* friend-making and keeping. Taking the word in its literal sense, an "institution" is a community, all the rights, duties and privileges of which find ground of standing in itself. It implies a common interest for which all its members are supposed to be working—and not only working, but working in harmony, each with all the rest. It implies cheerful submission to necessary rules, in order that some may not work at cross-purposes with others. The beehive is an institution. The drone says, "I believe in the freedom of the will; I don't propose to take orders from anyone, not even from your queen; I will work or not as I

choose, and I choose not to work." Or, suppose a working bee to set up for himself and say, "Yes, I will work, but only in my own way—here, there, anywhere, as best suits my fancy." While each of these might claim to be still counted as a friend, he would really be and would be reckoned to be an enemy—an enemy not only of the queen-bee, but of the whole hive. As a matter of observation, we know that the drone is treated as an enemy, and, after fair warning—for the good bees are patient—if the recalcitrant does not come into harmony with the rest and with the law of the hive, he is cast out. He that is not with the hive is against it; so that, although cast out, really he is self-ostracized, self-banished.

The solar group of heavenly bodies is more than the sun plus so many planets with their satellites. They are a solar system. They not only stand, but they "stand together," as the Psalmist says and as the word "system" means. The reason why they stand at all is because they do stand together. Each has his own impulse of motion, but these individual impulses are held in willing subjection to the one great central authority, the sun. Suppose one of the planets, Mars, for ex-

ample, resolving to be free and to have a route and time-table of his own, should refuse longer to pay this obedient though distant homage to the sun? There is but one way in which this, its self-willed ambition, could be gratified. It must break away from the sisterhood of planets and speed along its own headstrong and companionless way—speed along—how long, and how far? Until the mighty cable of its home-attraction, every moment spun thinner and thinner from the retreating axle, shall have dwindled to the finest filament; until at length its broken gossamer-ends float idly out into dark and returnless exile. Then a last good-by to one with whom we had counted lovingly together so many happy because obedient years.

The family is an institution, an institution established by God for the welfare and happiness of its members. But, in order that it may stand for that, its members must stand together under its appointed head, just as the members of the body must stand together under *its* appointed head. If foot, hand, eye or ear say, "I will take no orders from the head," it is no longer a friend of the body, but an enemy. Saying, "I am not of the body" does not make it so. A boy says, "Father,

I am a friend to you and to the family, but I am a free-thinker, and I am not going to take orders from you or from any head but my own." That is what it is for a boy to be *headstrong*. Then the father will say—he must say: "My son, God has made me the head of this household. We cannot have two heads here, and whenever there is a difference between us, you must submit your will to mine. You are no friend of either me or the family unless you do." If the boy persist in his determination to disregard the law of the family, there is but one thing for him to do—get what he can from his father and then take his journey into a far country, the farther the better—better for himself and better for the forsaken father and the deserted home—better, that is, until he shall, with chastened spirit, seek again the welcoming embrace of his father's forgiving love.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," is, therefore, a reasonable, as it is a natural, condition.

But had there been no such true friends of God before Jesus? Yes, as clouds far up the sky show the glory of the yet unrisen sun. Jesus had been the pattern of life for all the foregoing genera-

tions of men—the prophetic search-light signalling to patriarch and prophet on the clouds of those ancient skies, the outlined glory of the coming sun, the Sun of Righteousness—of One who should make it clear to all the world what a right life is by living it, just as the sun makes it clear as day what sunshine is by shining it; make it clear as day that, in order to be a friend of God, not only must obedience take the form of love, but love must prove itself to be love by taking the form of full and unquestioning obedience. Abraham saw the heralding signal, as later the Wise Men of the East saw their guiding star, and like them, when he saw it, he “rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” Called to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, he obeyed; “and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” For this unquestioning obedience it was that he was called the “Friend of God.” And as from contemplation of that foretokened better day and of that foreseen nobler man, Abraham drew impulse to make his own day a better day by making his own life a nobler life, so may we derive the inspiration and encouragement to nobler living, not only from the example

of Jesus, but also from the promised certainty of the friendlier world that is yet to be.

When Jesus, our Elder Brother, was about to leave the world, He said to Mary, weeping at the open and empty tomb, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

His wonderful mission to earth, then, had not been in vain. He did not leave it until He had won this great ascension triumph of love—a little company left behind Him whom He could call His "brethren"; those now owning His Father as their Father, His God as their God—until He could look up and say, "These are now in the world — through Me made Thine — and now, Father, I come to Thee."

Only he, then, is a friend of God who gives to God that supreme place in his affections and life which of right belongs to God. A man who is not my father, or a woman who is not my mother, may not demand of me filial reverence or affection; but the man who is my father and the woman who is my mother may and must demand them. I may withhold honor from others, but I may and *must* honor my father and my mother. Is that because



the commandment says so? No; it is not the commandment that makes the duty; it is the duty that makes the commandment.

What! "Sermons in stones" then? Yes—those ten short sermons which together we call the "Decalogue," were already imbedded in the two stone tables before Moses hewed them out from the speechless rock-girt side of Sinai. What did God do when He touched them with His finger? He made the hitherto inarticulate stones speak out the great fact which from eternity had been true, that there is one God only, Creator, Upholder and Lord of all; to speak forth what is eternally right, that to Him obedient love is due from His children, and equal love of men one to another as brethren, because children of one Father. About these glorious truths an estranged and darkened world had been holding its unsyllabled peace, until at length, touched by the finger of God, the very "stones cried out."

But what, when to this message from Sinai, megaphoned by thunders and emblazoned by lightnings, the stony hearts of His people, harder than Sinai's flint, gave forth no answer of filial love—not even to the tender pleading of God? "If I

be a Father, where is My honor, and if I be a master, where is My fear?"

Could even God himself do more? Yes; there was one thing more He could do, and that one thing He did. He sent His only begotten Son into the world, which had lost that knowledge out of its heart, to show in a more heart-compelling way just what it is to be a true child and so a true friend of God—to translate the provincial Hebrew characters of the stone tablets into the easily read and universally understood language of a truly filial and fraternal life.

How soon did Jesus begin this work of translation? "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This when but a boy of twelve years. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." "Even as I keep my Father's commandments and abide in His love"—are some of the utterances that marked His whole ministry of love. And at the end, how well worth the doing did He find all this had been, when, not doubtful, downcast or dumb, but, with the serene joy of one conscious of having always been a true son, He lifted

up His eyes to heaven and said, " Father, the hour is come; I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

And what the last words of this loving child of God, of this our Elder Brother, to us yearning and striving to follow in the same steps which He trod toward the same Father's house? The same last words for us as for the loved ones around Him, whom He was about to leave: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. And these are the things I command you, that ye love one another."

And His last prayer for us? The same as His last prayer for them: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."



XVIII

FROM LIKELIHOOD TO CERTAINTY



## FROM LIKELIHOOD TO CERTAINTY

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THE author of the third Gospel was a man who had been trained to do his own thinking. He was not a man to believe a story and then tell it simply because other men were believing and telling it; above all so wonderful a story, and so important if true, as that concerning Jesus of Nazareth. We find him accordingly making an exhaustive study of all the alleged facts in the case, and although not an eye-witness himself, yet applying the accepted laws of evidence to the testimony of those who had been such witnesses. Having satisfied himself that the things which he heard were true, we find him going further; putting into a written and permanent form for the information of others the results of his own candid and patient investigation.

But had not similar biographies of Christ been already given to the world? Yes, and that not a few. He tells his friend Theophilus at the out-

set that "many" had undertaken to arrange into a connected account the oral statements of those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." Yet he saw that something more and something better remained to be done. It may be that some of those many narratives were accurate enough as far as they went, but that they lacked minuteness and completeness. Of others the credibility may not have been sufficiently attested. Some, of Jewish origin, were not likely to take that broad and comprehensive view of the work and spirit of Christ which a converted Gentile, as he himself was, would be qualified to give. We find him, therefore, planning two distinct treatises; the former (his Gospel) to include facts concerning Christ omitted by other writers; the latter ("The Acts") to record the spread of Christianity through the labors of the Apostles. Privileged to be the intimate friend and companion of the Apostle Paul, he is careful to improve so great an opportunity to verify the current annals and traditions respecting Jesus. And having, as he says, accurately traced the whole story from the very first, instead of sitting down to enjoy in a selfish way the fruits of his inquiry, he uses



them to enlighten and confirm such as may be of a wavering or uncertain faith.

I. Greater numbers than ever before are to-day by tongue or pen bearing testimony for Christ. But in this is no reason why any and every disciple should not bear for Him his own personal and independent witness. Variety of testimony must be set over against variety of need. On no two of the "great multitudes" physically sick or disabled did Jesus perform precisely the same cure. Each case had its peculiarities for which each receiver of help had his own special thanks to pay and his own special testimony to give. "Go home to thy friends and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for *thee*." And so one went and said, "See, He has restored my withered arm;" another, "He has cleansed me of my leprosy;" and another, "He has cured me of my palsy." More ready should each one be who has been spiritually healed to show, for the honor of the Master and for the good of men, how good and true he has found the gospel to be for him. "Forasmuch as many have taken it in hand, it seemed good to me also."

What is the secret, on the human side, of the

marvellous success the gospel has already achieved but that this and that individual Christian has stood, each in his place, and has kept that place for Christ a stronghold of truth and righteousness? Is the church the "salt of the earth"? It is because each separate salt-grain having kept its own savor, the corruption of the world has crept to that grain but there it has stopped. Is the church the "light of the world"? Why, but that this and that Christian is keeping his own single lamp brightly burning? What is needed more? That every lamp be taken from under the bed or bushel and set each on its own candlestick.

No, not one earnest pastor or preacher, not one watchful elder or deacon, not one devoted Sunday-school superintendent or teacher, not one good teacher of sacred music nor a single singer, not one faithful father or mother, not a solitary working disciple of any grade whatsoever can be spared. Not one sincere prayer, exhortation or private entreaty or admonition can the church or the world afford to lose. That "many" others are faithfully exercising their gifts is no excuse for neglecting our own. Rather, the sight of so many trying to do or to bear lovingly for Christ should

make it seem "good to us also" to do what in us lies for the same Saviour, both theirs and ours. Nor,

II. Should we be kept from doing whatever commends itself to us as good to be done from a foolish fear lest we should seem to be copying after somebody else? Our Evangelist is greatly to be commended for having been willing to follow the lead of others. Now and then is a man who will do nothing unless he can be the first to devise and the first to execute. Had he only been the first to think of doing this or that or the first to suggest it, he would be foremost in doing it. While it is indeed well to be on the watch for new and better ways in which to do good and to be foremost in doing it, it is the higher nobleness of a true humility to be willing to be stirred up to good works by another. The next best thing to setting a good example, is to follow one. Is some man, yes, or some woman, before me in Christian sagacity or zeal? Let not a wicked and weak pride keep me from doing my duty simply because I have been reminded of it by another. "How can I be most useful in our common Master's cause?" is the question which should most deeply

engage every Christian heart. This free, broad, unselfish feeling is the most fruitful source of improvement in methods of Christian work, leading pastors to seek the best modes of employing and presenting truth, Sunday-school superintendents to adopt freely what has elsewhere proved most efficient in that department of labor, parents to inquire for and to put in practice the best means for the right training of their children. Discarding nothing because it is old, adopting nothing because it is new, it weighs candidly the suggestions and practices of other Christians and of other bodies of believers. If it finds anything better than its own in another denomination, it does not hesitate to appropriate it; borrow it, if you choose. Only a narrow, miserable, unchristian pride could prompt me to say, "I will do nothing that looks like copying after them." Rival denominations? It is a pernicious phrase. Never in any Christian heart should there be a particle of the feeling which those words express. While holding fast to our own established views of polity and doctrine, we should emulate one another not so much in the building up of denominations as in earnest endeavors to convert sinners and to make better

Christians. Whoever will show us how these things can best be done is our best teacher, our truest benefactor.

It is thought that some of the "many" of whom Luke speaks were authors either of spurious gospels or of narratives drawn up without due regard to accuracy of either statement or arrangement, and that it was for this reason, in part, that Luke undertook to compose a full, orderly and trustworthy history. In such expressions as "Having had perfect understanding of all things," "From the very first," "To write unto thee in order," "That thou mightest know the certainty of these things;" in these expressions one writer sees an implied accusation, a lurking censure of the "many" for the meagreness or inexactness of their productions; so that our Evangelist seeks not only to do a good thing better, but to counteract the effect of much which was positively false and injurious. And,

III. Here is an example still more worthy of our imitation, for we have here an inspired mode of *neutralizing the influence and preventing the spread* of religious error. That mode is not by abusing and denouncing those who may have put

forth false statements of either Scripture history or Christian doctrine, but by ourselves examining more thoroughly than ever before the foundations of truth, consulting candidly and patiently the best sources of information so as to have a "perfect understanding of it from the very first," and then by earnestly and patiently setting forth in speech and in life the convictions thus attained.

Luke doubtless consulted Paul in the preparation of both his Gospel and the "Acts." Those books must have received the Apostle's sanction as we know they received the sanction of the primitive churches. Our Evangelist might have spent his time, strength, parchment and ink, in ridiculing or execrating those partial, puerile and perverted records already in existence. But obeying the dictates of a higher and wiser teaching, he devoted his energies, instead, to a thorough revision of documents and traditions with a view to the perfect elucidation of the true gospel history, and to the recasting of it into a new and more acceptable form. The success of his two books thus carefully attested and prepared was as sure as it has been permanent. These two books have an immovable place in the sacred canon. Luke's gospel with the

three other canonical gospels have quietly displaced all of those spurious and apocryphal writings, and have consigned most of them to perpetual oblivion.

Let us in our conflict with error follow so noble an example; be encouraged by so signal a success. Let us go, each for himself, to the pure sources of truth. Let us in our studies seek ever the guidance of the all-enlightening Spirit. Let us resolve that we will have for our belief the sure sanction of the Word candidly interpreted. Then let us in the spirit of meekness and of love set forth the results of our examination and the joy of our experience. "Wisdom will be justified of her children." They who are of Christ will hear His voice and will follow Him. They who are led by the Spirit will distinguish the true from the false, the precious from the vile, that which is of God from that which is of man or the devil. God will vindicate His own truth by giving it enlargement and success. The way to scatter darkness is not to rage against it, but to kindle a light. We go out together on some moonless and starless night. Above us is a high huge wall of midnight darkness. How is this darkness to be gotten rid of?

Shall we ask that myriads of invisible spirits be despatched to cut it away, as we cut away a snow-bank, throwing it out block after block? God's way is to roll the earth quietly, irresistibly around on her axis to the sun, and as this is done how noiselessly but how surely does the darkness melt from its top downward and flee away, no one knows how or whither. So let minds overshadowed by error around us, so let the darkened nations be turned by God's Providence and Spirit, moved by prevailing prayer, till the beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall fall upon them and there will and must flee before them the gloom of heathenism and the darkness of doubt.



## XIX

SECURITY AGAINST NATURAL AND  
MORAL EVIL



## SECURITY AGAINST NATURAL AND MORAL EVIL

THE Agricultural College is an organized attempt to get at the last bottom fact of vegetable physiology. The wisest farmer is he who makes most careful study of what Nature requires in order to successful husbandry. Instead of quarrelling with her foundations, he keeps in closest submission to the heart of his ground and of all growing things. So far from regarding his work as monotonous drudgery and degrading bondage, he feels that his is almost a holy calling, having Nature herself as an ever-willing adviser and generous co-worker and friend.

For the civil engineer's task the unalterable foundations are laid in the kinds of force with which he has to deal. Your quiet, unworried, unhasting builder is one who acquaints himself thoroughly with these foundations; who aims to get at the last bottom fact of gravity—pressure, and of the resistance of all the materials he employs.

Stephenson and Roebling were never known to complain of the long time it took them to work out the many and intricate problems involved in the safe construction of the Britannia and Brooklyn bridges. Only one deeply versed in such matters can rightly estimate the patience, energy, prudence and forecast required for the planning and carrying forward to successful completion of such enormous constructions; such as those of the Mt. Cenis and Hoosac tunnels; or of the Suez and Panama Canals. The capable and honest engineer has a calm, unfearing, unhesitating confidence in the enduring safety of his work.

Having carefully examined and implicitly accepted the foundations of his art, the wise steam-fitter works accordingly. He makes patient study of steam pressure. He is settled as to two things; first, that steam has a way of acting, all its own; and, second, that he can count to a certainty on its acting always in just that way. Over against the severely tested expansive power of steam he sets the as severely tested tensile strength of his plates and rivets.

While each business has foundations of its own, underneath all these individual foundations Nat-

ure, in society, has laid the one common, indispensable foundation of business honesty. The most self-composed, most unhasting man of all is the man who has gone down and planted his business on this bed-rock of absolute business integrity. "The foundations are laid in righteousness. It is honest hands that are doing the world's work. Honor, truth and good faith lie at the bottom of the whole commercial and social system. The fabric of our civilization would fall at once, were it not so. Where one man lives by fraud, a thousand live by fair means. Where a lie sells one bill of goods, the truth sells a thousand. Where one dollar is lost by being honest, thousands are lost by being dishonest. Our minds are filled by some great fortune that has been built up by deceit and cunning; we forget that it was possible only because most men are honest. It is the honest dollar that floats the counterfeit for a season. Just lawyers, conscientious physicians, upright mechanics and laborers are doing the work that makes America great and prosperous to-day."\*

And as of the good we crave, so of the evil we would shun.

\* President A. V. V. Raymond.

Take any case in which natural evil is by human skill prevented, alleviated or overcome—how is that done? Certainly not, by either ridiculing, underestimating or ignoring it, but by looking it squarely and honestly in the face, patiently investigating it; ascertaining, as far as we can, its exact nature, dimensions and cause, and then by *applying an appropriate and adequate remedy*. No threatened physical harm do we either seek or expect to turn aside save through means specifically adapted to that particular end. When in tropical seas “the silver finger of the barometer” heralds the hurricane, the prudent mariner reefs his sails. Has his ship sprung a leak? “All hands to the pumps,” is the prompt command. We establish quarantine because only that keeps the infected ship from infecting the shore. Years ago, the Russian Government, alive to the malignity of the “black pest,” surrounded the infected districts by cordons of troops who were ordered to shoot down every man who might try to escape—a measure justifiable, because not more severe than the danger required. Filth diseases are forestalled by making the foul clean. In any such threat or outbreak of evil, not only do we seek a remedy suited

to the danger, but we thank and applaud those who faithfully apprise us of the danger and provide for us a way of escape. The miner's safety-lamp is quite as much a credit to Sir Humphry Davy's philanthropy as to his laboratory skill. Edward Jenner, misconceived and vilified for years, after prosecuting his inquiries under most disheartening opposition, came at length to be hailed as one of the world's great benefactors for having given to it vaccination. To Pasteur we yield a like sincere homage.

If, then, there be those who are prejudiced against the Bible, or, if not prejudiced against it, are indifferent to its worth and claims, a truer feeling is likely to be awakened for it, by considering that it is given to us mainly as a kind and trustworthy answer to the question, "*What is a sure, a complete, a heart-satisfying remedy for this spiritual derangement which we call sin?*" Not, be it remembered, some partial and insufficient and so in the end delusive and disappointing deliverance, but a deliverance full, sure and abiding. There were safety-lamps enough, so called, before Davy's. There was the little steel revolving against pieces of flint. There was Clanney's lamp

and Stephenson's. But all these were given up because found by trial to be treacherous and insecure. So, there have been devices enough of sages, moralists and philosophers for restoring to holiness, happiness and heaven sinful and lost man. And what if it should appear that what the world by all its wisdom has proved itself powerless to discover, God has most kindly and graciously made known to us in His revealed Word? That Jesus has been given us, a perfect guide and deliverer where all merely human guides and deliverers had failed?



XX

BETTER THAN MIRACLE



## BETTER THAN MIRACLE

THE Lystrians had worshipped, time out of mind, at the shrines of Jupiter and Mercury; the patron gods whose statues adorned either side of their city gate. They continue thus to worship until they hear a new teacher speak and see him cure by a word a life-long cripple. Here, at last, is something better than even the grandest and most imposing of any of their idols. Here is a great and good thing—not talked about merely like the exploits of Hermes and Hercules as having been done for mankind in some golden age long vanished—but a great and good thing done here and now, in the sight of their own eyes and within the hearing of their own ears: “Stand upright on thy feet,” commands the divine messenger—and he speaks the word, not with the whispered uncertainty of their own muttered oracles, but with a clear, ringing, sonorous voice—the robust expiration of a delegated soul in conscious

communion with heaven—"prostrate, helpless, suffering fellow-creature and fellow-sinner, the God whose I am and whose you are, bids you stand upright on your feet." And the poor cripple, impotent from his mother's womb, who had never taken a step in his life, leaps from the ground and walks. Jupiter! where is he? For we know not how many scores of years, he has been looking down from his grand pedestal on this poor cripple, yet always with the same cold stare of his stony eyes. Ever since he was placed there with ovation of divine honors he has, too, held in his right hand the forged thunderbolt, symbol of all-working power; yet never has he vouchsafed an electric touch to those poor, lame feet. By his side, too, stands Mercury, the god of that eloquence whose holiest office it is to plead for the wretched and the helpless; yet never have *his* finely chiselled lips moved to stir the pity of the stern Olympian king, father of gods and men.

No wonder the people are amazed. The cripple's unbound ankles have rent the more cruel superstition which has made them spiritual cripples from their own birth. No wonder, when they see what Paul has done, that they too find a

tongue; that they lift up their voices, saying (not in the polished Greek of the conventionalism of that day, but in the speech of Lycaonia; in that simple dialect of their nativity in which an intent soul always finds readiest and most earnest utterance): "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

This is one step toward their spiritual enlightenment and enfranchisement; but it is only one. Even yet they know no better than to turn from one kind of idols to another; from dead idols to living ones; from marble to men; for now they call Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul (because he is the chief speaker) Mercurius. And the priest of Jupiter brings oxen and garlands to the gate and would do sacrifice with the people; nor can they be restrained till the apostles, tearing their clothes and rushing in among them, reprove their impiety—warning them that they are clinging to things which are no true manifestations of God, while shutting their eyes to the real and abounding proofs spread everywhere around them of His presence and love. "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men with like passions with you and preach to you that you turn from these vanities to

the living God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are therein; who, in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless He left not Himself without witness in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

The lesson here taught is this: *That the commonest, most ordinary blessings of our every-day life are a better witness of God's loving care over us than are the uncommon and exceptional.*

Reading the narrative attentively we cannot but be struck with this, at first, most unexpected feature of it; that in what he has further to say to the people after the curing of the cripple, Paul lays no stress at all on the miracle; that he makes not even the slightest allusion to it, any more than if it had not been wrought; that he dwells not at all on the supernatural, but wholly on the natural; not on that which is done on the instant and without visible means, but on that which is done in ways that are entirely uniform and regular; not on the occasional and startling, but on that which is of stated and constant occurrence; not on the sudden, miraculous curing of the cripple, but on

the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and hearts filled by the Author of all good with food and gladness.

“What then,” it will be asked, “is the need and what the use of the miracle?”

Oh, the pity of it, but so it is, that, without knowing it, we get into the way of thinking that our daily income of good—showers, dews, seasons, harvests, health, friends, civil freedom, are all matters of course; no more than we deserve and have a right to expect; whereas we need to be aroused to understand that none of these blessings are matters of course or of chance, but that they are all gifts of God's great mercy for which returns are due to Him of humble acknowledgment and grateful service. For this, sadly enough, the world has, from time to time, needed miracles. What have the miracles of the ages been but sudden blows to awaken men to the reality of God's personal existence; to the realization of what He has been all the time doing for us in the quiet bestowment of his manifold and unfailing benefits? The miracle, in a word, is an extraordinary act done to call our attention to a long series of ordi-

nary acts—a special witness called upon the stand, not so much to give new testimony as to command respect for the many witnesses who had gone before—witnesses whose testimony had lost interest for us simply by reason of its monotonous repetition—that continuity of kindness from the creation of the world which, instead of scepticism, should inspire our love. God stops us all for a moment by the miracle, as Paul stopped the Lystrians, to show us that the path in which we have supposed ourselves to have been walking alone and unfriended is not only the path of His own good and wise ordering, but that He has himself been walking with us, and that He has never failed to mark and to supply our need.

The miracle does its best work for us, then, when it leads us to thus apprehend God as a constantly loving and bountifully providing Father. If we understand that already, we need no miracle.



## XXI

ABSENCE, NOT DESERTION



## ABSENCE, NOT DESERTION

ABSENCE, whether only seeming or real, is not necessarily desertion. Either may be without the other. There may be desertion without absence. A husband may desert a wife utterly; or a wife, her husband, yet they may live together in the same house and eat at the same table. Desertion is the withdrawing and withholding of affection. It lies not in space but in spirit. It is measured not by furlongs but by forgetfulness. Its degrees are degrees not of latitude or longitude, but of lukewarmness. On the other hand there may be absence without desertion. Business calls a man to Calcutta or Canton. Leaving his wife and children he puts half the earth's circumference between himself and them. He leaves them, but he does not forsake them. As he sails away he lays along the ocean's bed a heart-cable flashing back assurances of unabated affection—the "lengthening chain" of Goldsmith's traveller who writes back from a far-off clime:

“ My heart, untraveled fondly turns to thee ”  
—the sentiment of one of the noblest of our missionaries who from under the shadow of the Himalayas in far-away Upper Assam, wrote to friends at home: “ Oceans and climes cannot separate us. They can only draw a veil between the outward forms of humanity, but not between souls; that is, our real selves.”

The Hebrews once made for themselves a god which they could see—the golden calf—because Moses who had led them out of their bondage was staying away from them longer than they thought he ought to stay. But *where* was Moses? He was in the top of the mount whither God had called him. And what was Moses doing there? He was receiving from God a manual of right worship; ordinances for the regulation of their family and social living; and, above all, that great ten-commandment code which was to be the foundation of just laws for the whole world and for all time. Moses staid away from the people until his work was fully done, and no longer. He would have been unfaithful to the people, as well as to God, had he come down a moment sooner than he did.

How long did Jesus stay on Mt. Calvary? "Let Him come down now," said the mocking Scribes, "and we will believe." But Jesus had the great work of our redemption to accomplish and He held himself faithfully to that work until He could say, "It is finished."

How long will He now stay on that other mount—the Mt. Zion above? Until His other great work is fully accomplished, of interceding for His people and of upholding those whom He sends forth to preach the gospel to every creature; until to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.



XXII

GOVERNMENT OF THINGS BY PURPOSE





## GOVERNMENT OF THINGS BY PURPOSE

IN Nature everything is held by absolute divine purpose. Each atom is held to be what it is and each force is held to act as it does. These natural obligations or bonds underlie and guarantee natural order. Nature is a cosmos, because it is a constitution; things stand because they stand together; and they stand together because they are held together. The banns were proclaimed in the beginning and what God hath joined together only God can put asunder.

But while the purposes of God in nature are absolute, they are not arbitrary but constitutional purposes. Some of the American Colonies were known as the royal provinces, others were charter provinces. The difference (and it was immense) was that in the royal provinces the king's will was arbitrary, so that nothing could with certainty be counted on. The colonists were without guarantee of consistent action on the part of the king,

who was at liberty to say one thing to-day and its opposite to-morrow. To the latter named provinces the king had granted charters in which he had defined and limited his own powers. He had bound himself by the charter and the colonists held him to what he had himself written. Nature is a constitution. It is God's unwritten *Magna Charta* freely bestowed. Under it results are calculable, giving intelligence to endeavor and stability to expectation.

Under a natural constitution natural *oughts* follow natural obligations. We know what ought to be when we have discovered what it is *bound* to be. It is because the sun and the earth are bound together by gravitation that we can tell to the fraction of a second when the earth ought to be at her vernal equinox. Tell us how strongly potassium is allied to oxygen, and we will tell what ought to take place when potassium touches water, and how carefully it must be kept lest it be consumed by the fervor of its own passion. Just when and where cyclones and earthquakes ought to come, and of what pace and force, we shall perhaps know, one of these days, as surely as we now know where the trade-winds ought to blow. Till we do know, however,

cyclones, tornadoes and earthquakes may be safely trusted to do their exact and whole duty. When we have ascertained what that is we shall have what we have not as yet, a seismic and a cyclonic science.

Only infrangible obligation as expression of absolute purpose makes any science possible, since the aim of all science is to trace the bonds by which things are held, rather than to make full enumeration of the things which are so held. Hence progress in knowledge is truly progressive only as it makes progress toward science, while science itself is an end to progress. When the ligament or law by which isolated facts are bound and held together has been once found, we are done. The chain of truths which constitute the laws of the planetary system was completed and completed forever when Newton discovered the identity of gravitation with the force which carries the heavenly bodies in their orbits. That is the end. We may go over the same ground, re-survey the roads now that the great engineers of the heavens have staked them out; we may apply the formulas and verify the calculations, but we can go no further. The science of astronomy is a circular railway, and, go

forever, you go and come by the self-same routes and by the self-same time-tables which Kepler and Newton surveyed and recorded. You may add a new car to the already made-up train, provided you are fortunate enough to stumble on one in any of your telescopic rambles, or better still, provided that, like Adams and Le Verrier, you have computed where one ought to be found and so where to look for it. When the deer-stalker has once found the radius of the circle which the hunted stag is taking through the forest, he can tell pretty accurately at what time the stag will pass a given point. And so Le Verrier, that mighty Nimrod of the heavens, having computed what course his unseen but suspected game must be taking through his safe and secret far-off ranges of the sky, flings his nimble lasso at a venture three hundred millions of miles into those vast outer depths of space, and there his friend Galle, who was by request watching the throw with his spy-glass in Berlin, sees the flying fugitive and sees how barely he escapes being ringed by the falling noose.

And as the inorganic so the organic world is a constitution. Humboldt can tell us where the different flora and fauna ought to be found be-

cause wedded to their natural homes. From a single scale of a truant fish Agassiz tells in what distant waters the fish ought to have been taken. A distinguished botanist once said that the high-latitude *Sedum Rhodiola* ought to be found in the refrigeratory which Nature has made for herself in the deep, sunless gorges of the Nockamixon hills. And there, to his satisfaction though not to his surprise, he found it. The demonstrator of anatomy fears no loss of professional standing by saying beforehand just what bones, muscles, nerves and glands ought to be found in the subject before him. The physiologist asserts what function each organ of the body ought to perform and that hygiene, therefore, is a science and pharmacy an art. The physician tells his patient who will not eat because he has no appetite, that if he has no appetite he ought to have one and that something is wrong. It is to be said of every man that he ought to have all the appetites and all the sensations of which the body is the appointed and proper seat. He is bound to see, hear, smell, taste and feel things to be what they are; to see blue to be blue, to taste sugar to be sweet, to feel velvet to be soft.

Going higher to the intellect, we find that the

intellect, too, is held. The stern Vulcan of logic binds and leads captive with unbreakable chains. We are compelled to believe that to be true which is proven to be true, and there are kinds of proof which we are forced to accept as valid. With justifiable ferocity the logician says to however great and however defiant an audience, "I am going to hold every man of you to admit the truth of my proposition." No mind of all the generations since Pythagoras but is held irresistibly to the conclusion that the hypotenuse squared equals the sum of the squared sides.

And as of the intellect and the appetites, so of the desires. Every man is under natural obligation to desire knowledge, esteem, property and power. Every man ought to desire these in much the same way that a vine ought to send its roots out into the soil and its limbs and leaves out into the air in quest of that nutriment through which the vine is bound to cluster in due time its branches with fruit.

The sensibilities are constituted. In virtue of this constitution we are held to honor our parents and to care for our children, to pity the distressed, to be thankful to benefactors, to see beauty in

what is beautiful, to admire what is admirable, to adore what is adorable, to worship what is worshipful. It is as much a part of our *primeval* constitution to love God and our neighbor as it is to love parent and child, to see the force of proof, to see beauty in a rose or a rainbow, to see a red target to be red, to be charmed with melody. The profoundest of philosophers and truest of teachers says even more; for it is He who affirms that it is as natural for the soul to hunger for God as it is for the body to hunger for bread.

Thus far (that is, till we reach moral choice) the world appears to be as Boyle has called it, "a great and admirable automaton," or, as I would rather call it, a great and admirable *theomaton*; a system all whose members are held together and all whose movements are directed and determined by correspondencies of parts and powers wisely and immovably established by the Creator.

God's dominion over Nature, then, is by absolute, unquestioned purpose. What the governing obligations should be it was for Him and Him alone to determine: "There is but one Law-Giver." Properties and powers, provisions and adaptations are not made to depend on our consent;

they come to us as fixed purposes claiming our implicit and full *assent*. In nature obligation is the sole element; so that what ought to be will be, and what ought to go will go, and will go as it ought. Here, "whatever is is right." Consequent is married to antecedent. Results are calculable. Occurrence becomes recurrence. That which has been is, and that which is is that which shall be.

This gives to science its realms and its limitations. Science discovers; it cannot originate. A scientist may suspect. That is legitimate enough, and is often very useful. But the man who, for the sake of being talked about as an "advanced thinker," is too quick both to suspect and to proclaim as a discovery what is as yet only a suspicion, is a suspicious and in proportion to his influence a mischievous character. To trumpet speculation for fact, whether in science or theology, in advance of indubitable proof, is as if Columbus, after having sailed from Palos in search of a new world, had gone no farther than to the Canaries, had there drawn on his invention for a map of a new continent, had called the continent after his own name and had then claimed the glory of having



discovered something. The only thing he would have discovered would have been his own map, and that would not have been a discovery but a fraudulent, though possibly an ingenious invention—a paper continent not worth the paper on which it would have been engrossed.

And as science begins, so it ends with discovery. When the discoverer has discovered, discovery ceases. Columbus could discover America but once. So with invention, which is but applied discovery, and so with art, which is but applied invention. The best inventor, like the best discoverer, is the least original. He invents best who listens best. Sitting by his quiet hearth-fire James Watt hears again what he and thousands of others have heard a thousand times before, but with inattentive and therefore with indifferent ears. Watt now for the first time gives heed, and giving heed he begins to question with himself whether this low musical sound may not have in it a divine message of good. How eagerly does he con the phrases of this message and pry into their hidden benevolence of divine intent, till at length in the steam-engine he is able to make to industry “the most magnificent gift it has ever received.” Our

wisdom lies, not in attempting to alter the terms of the message, but in candidly interpreting the message and in conforming to it our plans and our endeavors. "God is not mocked." Steam will work for us, but in God's appointed way only. The valves wrong, the vapory giant will fume and fret in his iron harness, but he will not draw. The valves right and he will. To him who asks how he may inherit the present life nature answers, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YE WHO DO THEM."

## XXIII

GOVERNMENT OF PERSONS BY PROPOSAL



## GOVERNMENT OF PERSONS BY PROPOSAL

THUS far we have found no choice and no freedom. Gravitation has no choice but to pull as it does, nor cohesion but to stick fast as it does, nor chemical affinity but to tie fast as it does by invariable formulas. Plants have no choice. The orchid is pre-determined to be an orchid and the oak an oak. Nor have brutes choice. They do not devote themselves to courses of their own choosing, but are held to what they do by their respective instincts. The appetites and the desires in man have no choice but to impel as they do. The intellect has no choice but to conclude as it does. Nor *primarily* is it because man chooses so to do that he loves his offspring, his neighbor, or his God. And knowing the wise construction out of which all these results flow, we know what ought to follow and what, therefore, it would be right to expect. We expect gold to resist oxidation and we expect iron to rust. We expect food to nourish

and prussic acid to kill. Rarey can tame and train any horse. The farmer and the florist call and crops and flowers come. Doll-makers count on their trade being good to the end of time. Managers of charity-boards assume financial responsibilities on the strength of expected incomes; they know the force of sympathetic appeal. There is a philosophy of rhetoric and an art of persuasion. The proverbs of Solomon are as true and as serviceable now as they were three thousand years ago. There is a human nature and it may be studied and known.

It is a part of this nature that the relative superiority of its parts, powers and products is self-indicated. So that let a man yield himself to the incitement of these powers according to their relative and naturally indicated rank and worth, let him allow nature to have its own way with him, and he will be convinced by all that is valid in proof, will feel the beauty of all that is beautiful, will be awed by all that is sublime, will be saddened by all that is pitiful, will love all that is lovely. He will weep when he ought to weep and will laugh when he ought to laugh, will mourn when he ought to mourn and dance when he ought

to dance, will love when he ought to love and hate when he ought to hate; he will live as long as he ought to live and will die when and as he ought to die.

But when we say, "If a man will let nature have its course," it is implied that he may, if he will, decline to do that. And this reveals to us another part of our constitution with an obligation and an ought of a very different kind. Let there be nature only and man would be an automaton; an automaton of a very noble sort, but yet an automaton. Wherever there is calculable product there must be somewhat of a mechanical or compelling element in the producing power; something of routine and monotony. And so while the result may be good, it is yet a lower form of good. It is natural and not moral good. There is no morality and no virtue in any machine, however perfect its construction and however noble or beautiful the product. Morality implies moral obligation, and moral obligation necessitates moral choice, and choice in its very nature is free. And this is an entirely different thing from natural obligation; or rather, it is another form of natural

obligation or holding having a moral element in it; an obligation, that is, the feeling of which arises naturally in us; which because natural we must feel; but yet an obligation which we may respect or disregard, a bond which we may let ourselves be held by or may break away from, as we shall choose. All the merely natural obligations, those arising from the constitution, are before us; as many of them at least as we have in any way come to understand, and it is then for each man to say for himself whether or not he will heed these arrangements of the Great Arranger, these provisions of the Great Provider, these ordinations of the Great Ordainer.

Now the peculiarity and grand distinction of moral government is, that such government is not by absolute purpose but by contingent proposal. It is the high dignity of man that God makes proposals to him, giving to him the liberty either of accepting, adopting and carrying out freely what God proposes, or of setting these proposals at naught; the choice whether he will respect and keep the divine order, or, disregarding it, make disorder in its place.



“ And binding nature fast in fate,  
Left free the human will.”

But is there not a contradiction here? To say that a man is under obligation, is bound, is held, and yet is free? Is that an honest, a genuine proposal which a man is bound beforehand to accept? Is it not a contradiction, is it not a sarcasm and a mockery, to say to any man with regard to any proposed action, “ Voluntary on your part, but compulsory on mine? ”

An apparent contradiction certainly, but not a real one. For that is the only kind of obligation, holding or government that is possible with beings having freedom of choice. The fulfilment of God's precepts is necessarily contingent on the choice of those to whom the precepts are given. Has God, then, put Himself in a position to be thwarted and mocked? No, because it is a proposal with alternatives in case of acceptance or rejection. To compel acceptance, however, by depriving man of the power of refusal would be to demoralize, or rather to *unmoralize* him; to reduce him not to an immoral but to an unmoral being. But so sacredly does God hold this divine

freedom that rather than destroy it He will see a man or even an angel become a devil. It was carrying self-abnegation quite too far when a charming Christian lady once said to me, "I am perfectly willing to be a machine if God will turn the crank!" so heartily did she rejoice in the divine sovereignty. But God does not make his moral world go by means of any crank. No human law-giver ever took upon him to say, "No theft, robbery, incendiarism or murder shall ever be committed by any man under this government." Nor is it at all in that sense that God says, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." Were that its meaning the Decalogue would be but the declaration of an absolute purpose; a purpose, however, which could be carried out only by destruction of moral freedom. Yet God is not mocked. A man is mocked when he undertakes what he cannot carry out. But God does carry out all that he undertakes to carry out. What God says is not, "You shall never steal;" but, "If you steal I shall hold you to account." *All below man is held; only man is held to account.* The moon is held to revolve and the sparrow to build its nest and to rear its young. But should they fail, neither moon nor

sparrow could be held to account. Only one morally free can be morally held. Only the guilty can be held to answer, and only the free can be guilty. Rewarding right-choosing and holding wrong-choosing to account are the two great principles and methods of all moral government.

But what does holding to answer, or holding to account, mean? It means two things; that is, there is a double holding. The man who violates any part of his constitution is held to account, first of all by the constitution itself. A man abuses his body. He can do that. But his abused body holds him to answer for the abuse. Abuses of the body are fearful debts which the body is faithful to collect; and neuralgia and gout, dyspepsia and insomnia, delirium and paralysis are a few of its thousand agents to present the bills. A man abuses his intellect; but his intellect holds him to answer by impaired attention, corrupt association of ideas, mental one-sidedness or imbecility. Searing or perverting of the affections follows abuse of the affections. These evil things follow even though the man may have intended no wrong. Physically a man would be a daily drunkard were alcohol put in his food unwittingly to himself, as

surely as if he were to drink the poison at the bar of the vilest saloon.

And so if a man violates moral obligation, (which he does when he does voluntarily that which he either knows or believes to be wrong), he is held to answer for that by the moral penalties of self-rebuke, shame and remorse. These come of themselves and there is no escape. The "conscienceless" criminal, as he is called, has a conscience still and some day that conscience will do its work. "How different," moaned the murderer of Parkman when after he had been convicted and sentenced he was being led away to his cell, "How different a man's sin looks to him after it has been committed from what it did before." The fuse may be a long one and it may burn slowly, but in due time the fatal spark will reach the magazine where conscience has stored her materials of torment, and the ruin and the wreck will come. The "mills of the gods," which are said to "grind so slow and so exceedingly small," do not grind at all save as some responsible gate-keeper opens the gates in wantonness and lets the water on the relentless wheels.

But there is another holding. The law-breaker

is held to account by the law-giver directly and in person; a person holding a person to answer for a personal offence. The murderer may suffer the pangs of remorse in what he imagines is his safe hiding-place. But it is a different pang he feels when the detective comes suddenly and lays a strong hand on him and says, "Come with me; you are my prisoner." And when the indictment is drawn and a true bill is found and the offender is told that he is held to answer before the court, and then when sentence has been passed and he is taken to answer by loss of his freedom behind prison-bars or on the scaffold with his life—then to the penalty of remorse is added punishment by the judge. And then it is that the shame and the remorse are intensified by the open rebuke of deserved seclusion from companionship with the good. This exclusion is that "outer darkness" which makes the remorse and the shame break out in "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." We stand not in the presence of our own "spiritual worthiness" only; we stand also in the presence of our Judge.

Thus law is authority as well as guide. It commands as well as informs. "This is the way" is

the information; the direction, " Walk ye in it " is the command. This makes the proposal to be also a statute. Such has God made it by linking comfort to obedience and torment to disobedience. And what He has joined together neither nature nor man can by any means put asunder.

## XXIV

### BONDAGE BY LAW





## BONDAGE BY LAW

HERE is a serious exigency, and in order fully to meet it two things are clearly requisite. We need, first, to have our sentence remitted so that we be no longer held to answer personally for our sin. How can that be? Not by an act of simple clemency. Not by surrender of righteousness through some strenuously attempted but impossible catalysis of statute and judgment. Not by sacrilegious mutilation of the statute; cutting it in twain and keeping the informing "This is the way," and casting aside the authoritative "Walk ye in it." "To say and straight unsay" would bring both law and law-giver into deserved contempt. When the Law-Giver says, "Thou shalt surely die," it can be no other than an enemy, though professing to be a better friend, who will say, "Thou shalt not surely die." No earthly magistrate dare say that. *Human law makes no provision for pardon as such.* "If it commute the

sentence or grant a respite, it is only because the penalty has been found to be too severe under the circumstances, so that so-called mercy is not mercy but is only equity correcting the inequalities of law." Let juries refuse to convict, judges to sentence or magistrates to punish and they would "speed their own extinction and dissolve the bonds of society." Simply to forgive may evidence goodness. Only profoundest wisdom is equal to the task of upholding righteousness while acquitting the guilty. And the Gospel is wisdom. It is the "wisdom of God" no less than the love and mercy of God. And the wisdom is this, that while the Gospel is a release from the law, it is a release which honors the law by more firmly establishing it.

This principle of honoring the law by release from the consequences of its violation is well represented in cases of physical deliverance. A man is sent to sea in a stanch, sea-worthy vessel. But what is that which makes any vessel worthy of the sea? It is the regard had in its construction to all the known laws of hydro- and of *anemo*-dynamics. Rightly managed the ship makes a sure and safe

voyage. But the voyager carelessly runs his ship on a rock or wantonly scuttles her in mid-ocean. He thus challenges the sea to overwhelm him with his whelmed vessel. He can be rescued only by a life-boat sent from either the shore or from another ship. But what is a life-boat? A life-boat is a boat that is made as a ship is made, but with this difference, that the life-boat is made with a far stricter regard to the laws which govern the motion and action of water and of wind. And when (supposing him to accept the offered deliverance) the sinking suicide steps into the life-boat, by that simple act of trust he pays a new and profounder homage to that very law of the elements, by disregard of which he had invited his destruction.

And the Gospel is our life-boat. When Christ took our place, He took it by saying, "I will answer for you to the law." That answer He made. It was a straightforward, manly, honest answer. It was no evasive response, no eloquent but false pleading, no twisting or hiding of the evidence against us, no ingenious, self-sparing subterfuge. If there is any business which Christ utterly abhors, I think it must be that of the dishonest crim-

inal lawyer who, by purposely shielding crime, encourages and emboldens it to make a laughing-stock of justice. Christ is indeed our "advocate," but He is no such advocate as that. Having assumed the peril of our indictment He sought neither to quash the indictment nor to have it softened down by so much as one iota. He took on Him all our sin. And having taken it, when the question came whether He would go forward and make true answer by bearing our curse, no wonder that, understanding perfectly all the elements of that fearful account, no wonder that He was for a time in an agony of spirit. No wonder that He prayed, and that He prayed again, and yet again, "Father, let this cup pass from Me." No wonder that, added to His own, He needed an angel's strength to enable Him to say, "Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done."

And this is the Gospel, that though the guilty are acquitted and released, their acceptance of the substitution and sacrifice of Jesus, so far from making the law an idle word, "establishes the law" by the new and most powerful of all conceivable sanctions, the expiatory death of the Son of God.

XXV

RELEASE BY FAITH



## RELEASE BY FAITH

BUT along with the discharge of our account through the answering death of Christ, there comes through His transforming Spirit the no less needed deliverance from the torment of an estranged and hostile will. For though the trusting offender is no longer held to punishment, he is still held to the obedience of love. Never can any man cease to owe supreme love to God and equal love to his neighbor. But "owe" and "own," it is well to remember, are correlative words from the same root and originally of the same meaning. And there is manhood in the etymology. No man should owe his neighbor more than he owns, while every man owes all that he owns to God.

And it is pleasant to owe provided we can pay. But it is slavery, it is torture, to owe if we cannot pay; to lie under any just obligation which we cannot meet. Owe more money than you can pay, and

you are no longer a free man. You are bound by a miserable chain and your creditor grasps the other end of it. And that is a chain which no bankrupt law can ever break. You may abolish the debtor's prison, you cannot dissolve the debtor's chain.

A grateful heart finds its debt of gratitude only a pleasure, for a grateful heart means a solvent, a paying heart. Sir Joshua Reynolds (I think it was) once spoke sorrowfully to Goldsmith of the recent death of a man by whom Reynolds was once greatly befriended. "Be content," replied Goldsmith, "you will no longer be under the painful necessity of being grateful to him!" *Painful necessity!* Surely something is miserably out of joint when a man is bound to do, and ought to do, and is therefore properly expected to do, what he finds that it is not in his heart to do. Hearts are not made for fetters. "Owe no man anything" is an inspired man's manly motto. His "except to love one another" is no real exception to a rightly loving man. We may be held to do or held not to do, but we shall not *feel* that we are held provided we are free in doing or in abstaining. Given a perfectly true and straight track and a perfect wheel,



and without a flange the wheel would keep the rail. Love going freely and without external restraint is a flangeless wheel. It is the errant wheel only that grates and jars and binds. And if that be a false and unnatural condition where there is a just claim for love, but no love, most tormenting and pitiable of all must it be where there is no love and a just claim for the strongest—marriage without marriage-love. Our divorce leagues and literature, our codes and our courts, our magazines and the daily papers witness to what desperate means estranged wives and husbands will resort to escape, if possible, this bitterest, this most galling misery. What freedom, could the chain be honorably broken! What happiness if a perversely alienated wife be reconciled to her blameless and injured husband and there be a re-marriage with penitent and abiding love!

And this is no other than a divinely-drawn picture of the wretched servitude of sin and of the joyous freedom of Christian trust—the true “freedom of faith.” \* Between the unrenewed soul and the law to which by God’s ordinance it is sacredly wedded there is no congeniality, no sympathy.

\*Rom. 7: 1-4.

The estranged mind is utterly averse to the union, and is not, will not be, cannot be reconciled to it. Obedience, if rendered at all, is yielded only through fear and is but the obedience of a slave.

Such unwilling subjection is sufficiently dreadful even in the family or in the state, but is there made endurable by the certainty that it will some time be at an end. The hated husband and the hated monarch must die, or at the worst, the enslaved will themselves soon find deliverance in the grave. But for a mind embittered against the law there is not even that consolation. The law has dominion over it as long as it lives, and it is immortal. The law goes with it beyond the grave, and from the law's just claim it can never escape. This it was which made our state so dark and hopeless; this which moved the pity of Jesus to seek our rescue. By the willing answer which for our causeless enmity He made upon the cross Christ obtained for us an honorable and just release from the law which we were bound to obey but could not love. The change which comes to him who through Christ applies for and obtains this release is great and joyous. His heart is now free. If he serve now it will be from no feeling

of compulsion but only from choice. All legal restraint having been removed from his affections, he is at full liberty to bestow them on whatever new object he will. Yet who in all the wide universe so worthy to receive them as He who with His own blood bought for him this great deliverance, this priceless freedom? To Jesus, therefore, he surrenders himself with all the devotion of a new and loving bride, to serve no longer as before "in the oldness of the letter," but in the newness and freshness of a willing spirit.

It is here and here only that we have solved for us that great problem which through the ages had baffled the best human wisdom—the liberation of the affections from the overmastering dread of punitive disaster for inexcusable transgression. There have been self-demanded and self-imposed sacrifices to this end without limit. But neither heathen or Jew has ever been quite able to certify himself of the answering completeness of even his most lavish surrenders. The costliest sacrifices have come back only to the confusion of the offerer. The priceless ring which Polycrates had cast into the sea as an expiation for his crimes the tyrant, to his dismay, finds in the fish which the

cook sets before him at his next banquet. Not for an instant does the stress of any "self-invoked adversity" stay the step of the Nemesis of judgment.

Neither have forms sufficed. The "what-shall-I-do-more" Pharisee never knows when he has done enough. The "what-lack-I-yet" young ruler goes away sorrowing because he gets not the expected answer to his inquiry for the last term in his series of good deeds, and so cannot sum the series and make an end. Nor has changing the form of merely outward doing sufficed. Clad in this seemingly cloak of outward reformation many a worshipper has gone to God as Hercules is said to have prepared himself for sacrifice by putting on the robe tinged with the poisoned philter of Nessus. At first the hero felt no effect from it, but when the garment grew warm the venom began to consume his flesh till at length he put an end to his agony by a voluntary death. So men may wear with comfort the mantle of estimableness and in this decent guise may pass respectably among their fellows; yet when thus attired they approach that pure altar where the conscience is quickened by the apprehended presence of a heart-searching

and holy God, then the venom of self-righteousness with which every thread of that fatal robe is steeped begins its work. Then the unhumbled worshipper has the painfully disappointing conviction that his offering is not accepted. Then dissatisfied with himself he becomes dissatisfied with God; he is "wroth and his countenance falls," and he ends, it may be, with bitter though perhaps unexpressed hatred of a free salvation which can come only by the cross of Jesus.

From all this enslavement of fear, of form and of unhumbled hate that cross saves us. No sooner do we surrender ourselves to Christ in penitent and full trust than we are done and done forever with the stress and strain of trying to avert from ourselves punitive and deserved disaster. From all possible overthrow of shame and sorrow we are saved at once and saved forever. Fear is henceforth groundless and is a dishonor to Christ. The sorrowful answerer to law now becomes, instead, the joyful receiver of gifts. We are dealt with no longer on the ground of law but on the footing of grace. In His treatment of us Christ is governed no more by the strict exactitudes of justice but wholly by the unhindered promptings of love.

Where before we saw with trembling only a stern form sitting blindfold and bearing aloft in one hand the unswerving scales and in the other the unsparing sword, we see now a face of wondrously blended human and divine beauty and eyes beaming on us with tenderest love and hands full of blessings stretched out toward us. And our Christ, when He comes, brings with Him no nicely-poised balances with which to weigh our alms and our prayers and our dole of Christian work, to see whether we have earned enough wherewith to buy His offered good. Himself unconstrained in His affection, He ties us to no strict calendar of tithes or of times, to no hard arithmetic of sacrifices, of sufferings or of self-denials. What need? Since He has won for Himself a love which scorns to give less than all.

*“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”* (Rom. vii, 4.)











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